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SUBJECT: ON DAY OF SUPREME COURT DECISION ON 2003
ELECTIONS, POLICE STOP BUHARI SUPPORTERS, WARN OFF
"TROUBLEMAKERS"

REF: ABUJA 1153

1. With the Supreme Court due to deliver its judgment today, July 1, in the suit filed by 2003 ANPP presidential candidate General Muhammadu Buhari against the April 2003 re-election of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) police command warned yesterday that it would arrest anyone "coming into Abuja to foment trouble." Police spokesman Emmanuel Ighodalo said in a press release that his men have been instructed to stop "any mass movement into Abuja" from yesterday.

2. Following the order, the police have increased their motorized patrols in the FCT, intercepting and questioning suspected vehicles. Last week, an Abuja High Court had ruled that the 1990 Public Order Act, allowing the police to arrest and detain people engaged in peaceful assembly, was unconstitutional, and it voided the Act (reftel).

3. On the morning of July 1 along the Kubwa road into Abuja from Kaduna, three busloads of Buhari supporters displaying ANPP banners were intercepted by a police patrol team and prevented from going on to Abuja.

4. The Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) announced that it would mobilize its members for today's Supreme Court judgment. Osita Okechukwu, Assistant Secretary, said CNPP would "cash in" on the High Court's ruling allowing peaceful demonstrations, in order to stage a peaceful assembly today. He said that the peaceful demonstration would either commend or condemn the Supreme Court ruling today, but would be held either way.

5. In a nationwide radio and television broadcast last night, President Obasanjo announced the 60 percent debt cancellation by the Paris Club (septel). He also recounted the achievements of his administration and called on Nigerians to give him more support "to achieve more." The broadcast has been repeated several times by government radio and television stations since its original broadcast.

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